



# **Acclaimed Film Maker Rages On Work Against Opioid Epidemic Despite COVID-19 Surging Across Country**

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
December 23 2020 11:33 AM

ALEKSANDER  
RISTIC

MARCUS  
JOHNS

ANGELA  
NORDENG WITH

PHIL  
LAMARR AND

NICK  
MOSS

# DANCES WITH FILMS

OFFICIAL SELECTION

WINNER  
BEST FEATURE  
2017 FILM FESTIVAL

WINNER  
BEST FEATURE  
POLICE INTERNATIONAL  
FILM FESTIVAL

WINNER  
BEST ACTOR  
DART MOORE  
FILM FESTIVAL

WINNER  
BEST ACTOR  
PLAYHOUSE BEST  
FILM FESTIVAL

WINNER  
BEST DIRECTOR  
PLAYHOUSE BEST  
FILM FESTIVAL

NOMINEE  
BEST FEATURE  
DART MOORE  
FILM FESTIVAL

OFFICIAL  
SELECTION  
BURBANK CITY  
FILM FEST

OFFICIAL  
SELECTION  
ACTION ON  
FILM FESTIVAL

OFFICIAL  
SELECTION  
HOLLYWOOD DREAMS  
FILM FESTIVAL

NOMINEE  
BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS  
DART MOORE  
FILM FESTIVAL

"A BEAUTIFUL FILM AS CONCERNED  
WITH POETRY AS IT IS PLOT."

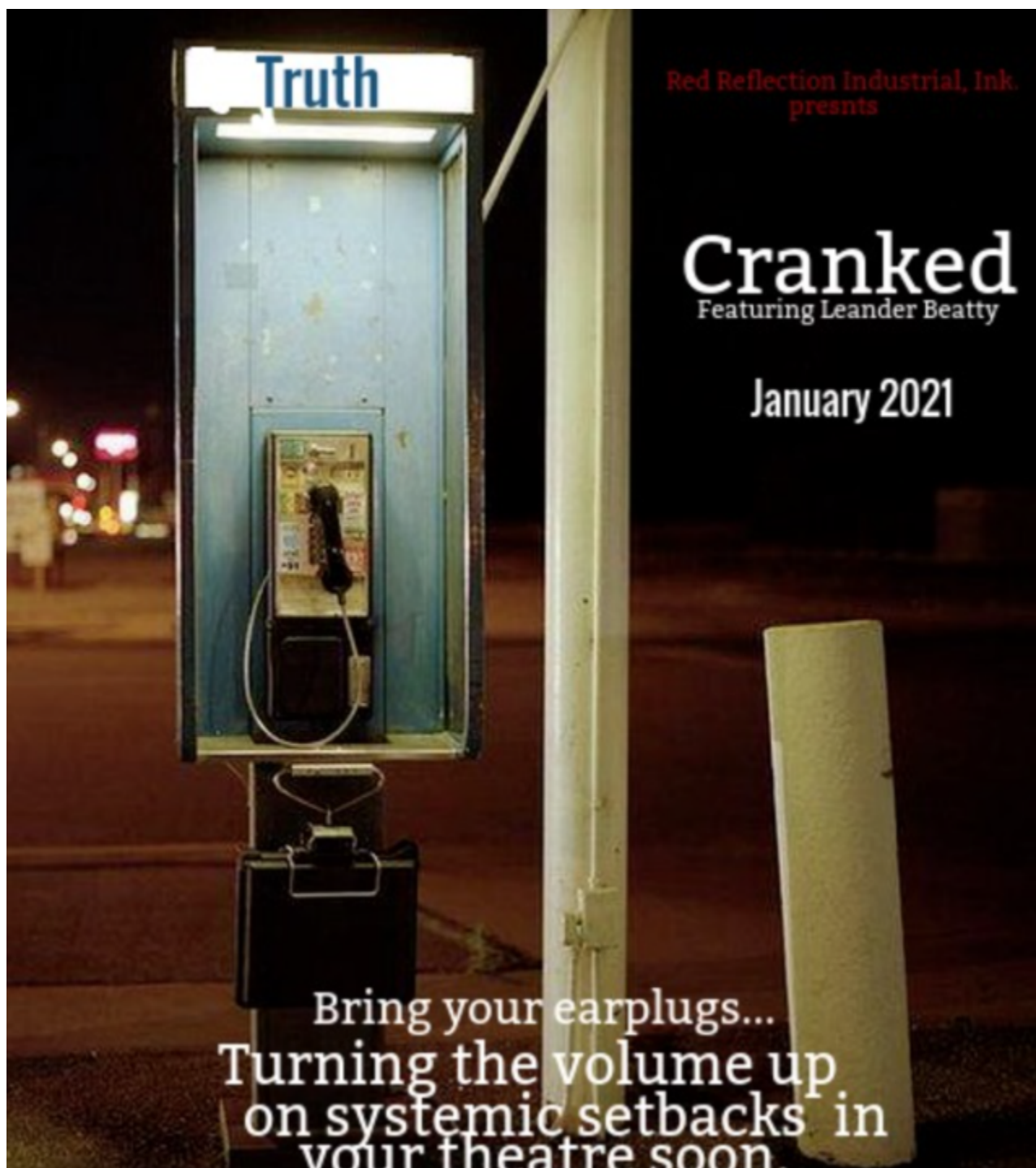
LONITA COOK, FILM CRITIC, KCTV5

IN THIS

# GRAY PLACE

A FILM BY R.D. WOMACK II

WOMACK FILM WORKS IN ASSOCIATION WITH BMWWOOD PRESENTS ALEXANDER RISTIC IN THIS GRAY PLACE  
MARCUS JOHNS, ANGELA NORDENG, WITH PHIL LAMARR AND NICK MOSS PRODUCTION DESIGNER PRARTHANA JOSHI ORIGINAL MUSIC BY MIRO KEPINSKI  
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY NAEEM SEIRAFI CO-PRODUCERS TRACY KESHEK EXECUTIVE PRODUCER BABAK MOSAVI PRODUCED BY RADHIKA WOMACK WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY R.D. WOMACK II



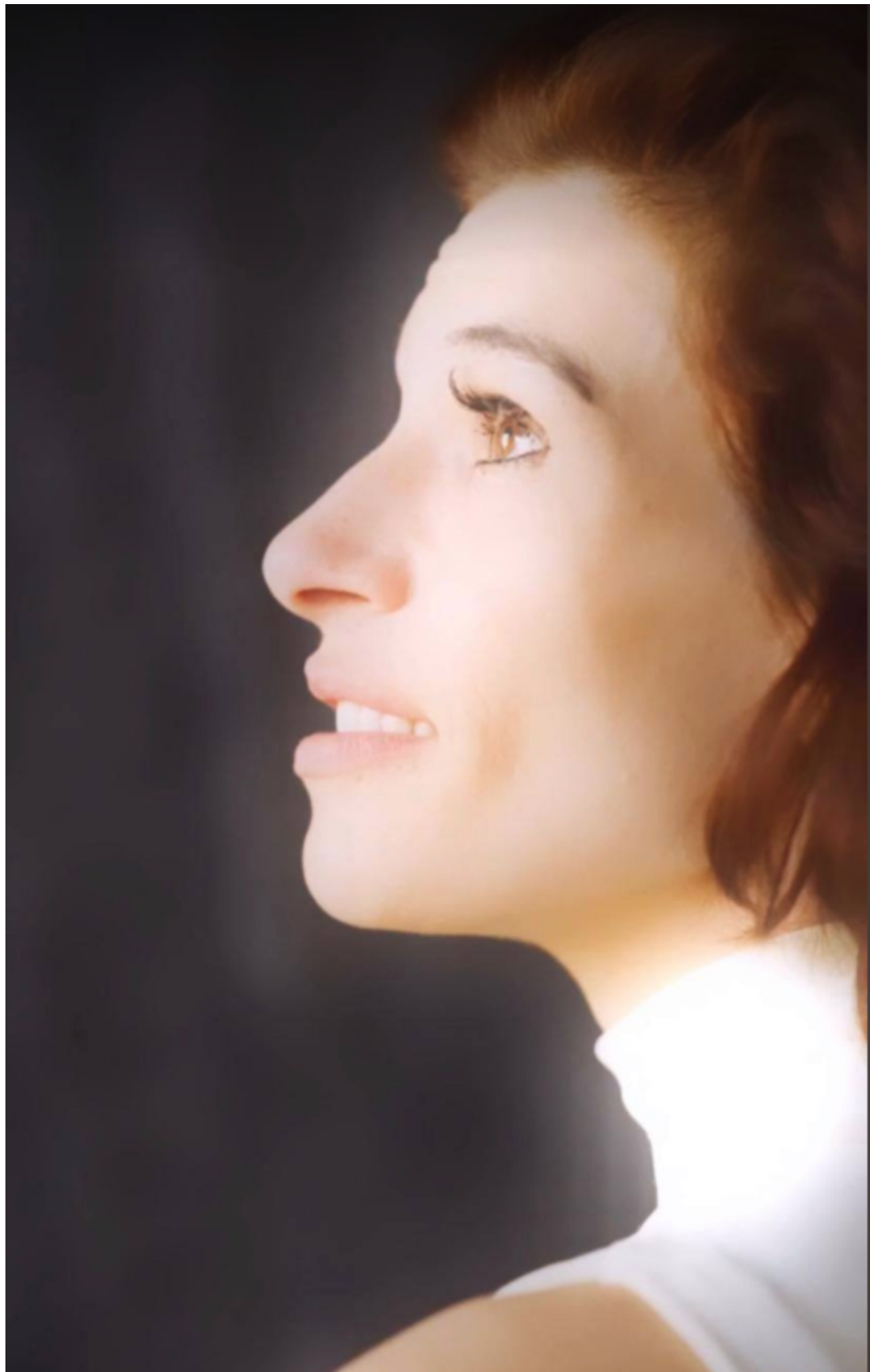
Red Reflection Industrial, Ink.  
presents

# Cranked

Featuring Leander Beatty

January 2021

Bring your earplugs...  
Turning the volume up  
on systemic setbacks in  
your theatre soon.







ST. LOUIS - Acclaimed local filmmaker Ele Mercurio Cherrier is poised for 2021 with an assortment of new film production despite the COVID-19 Pandemic. The film releases will start on February 1, 2021, in a COVID-19-compliant friendly atmosphere.

Ele has focused a significant amount in her filming sending strong messages about drug addiction and in the end, hope to live a clean and sober life.

“Most people assume drug addiction is the result of a bad childhood or sustained exposure to drug use by others,” Mercurio Cherrier said. “Sometimes, it’s the consequence of prescription drug use that spirals out of control.”

The director of the movie “Claimed,” says she aims to make movies that have an impact on addiction. The original film, she says is a historical fiction movie about an English colonization-gone terribly wrong in a new world filled with unspeakable beauty and uncertainty. Mercurio-Cherrier is an Illinois Independent Horror Filmmaker from Saint Louis. She has personally invested in her movies although not affiliated with any particular organization, she is in fact in recovery from heroin herself and has been for nine years.

Currently, Ele’s movies are more show-than-tell, eschewing a didactic approach for something more expressionistic and emotional as to help the audience to connect to the epidemic and understand it fully. Since May of 2020, the opiate epidemic has risen 42 percent nationally since the beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic, NBC News reports.

Ele said her whole life has led up to wanting to help others through film.

"My hope is if at least one person turns away from the drug epidemic then I have done a good job," she said. "I absolutely love film making. I feel like it is my calling."

Ele said she filmed the various projects during COVID-19 with the crew wearing Haz-Mat suits and testing and a lot of PPE and everyone was COVID-19 compliant and COVID- officers on-site making sure everyone was safe on set. Tilt-shift photography and film work was used to make people appear closer than they actually were on set. The actors and actresses were tested constantly, she added.

"We held our health and safety of our crew case and crew at the front of every production

With the COVID-19 Pandemic on the rise, the independent filmmaker has taken her future in the film to new platforms like Vimeo and others like it in order to show her movies. Using the resources in which she has at her dispose she is in the process of closing an agreement with the St. Louis Port Authority for use of the old Jamestown Mall parking lot to turn it into a drive-in theater for the time being with hopes of showing more movies there as soon as February 2020.

Although the film industry has been hit hard due to COVID-19, Mercurio-Cherrier presses on with four more new upcoming film releases that will be available both on her companies website as well as under the staff picks on Vimeo for free for that particular release date.

Inspired by the 1997 Public Service Announcement it is the remake of "This is your brain on drugs," starring Rachel Leigh Cook. Cherrier's anti-drug PSA short film "This Is A Drug, This Is Only A Drug." The movie reminds us of the youngest victims that drug addiction often leaves behind. This releases on December 30, 2020, to both Vimeo and the company site at:

<https://vimeo.com/channels/staffpicks>

The second short film is called "Cranked," and it focuses on a widower as he begins to witness, the grips of crack-cocaine in the 1980s begin to take over his community. He finds himself quickly wrestling with his own faith in God when addiction threatens to take his only daughter the summer after her graduation. This movie releases February 27, 2021, to both Vimeo and her site at:

<https://vimeo.com/channels/staffpicks>

A sister to the "Cranked" film project is "Systemic Inc." This is a short documentary regarding an honest discussion on systemic racism in Saint Louis and the Metro East region. It will be out on March 1, 2021, to Vimeo and the company site at the same:

<https://vimeo.com/channels/staffpicks>

The final one is titled "In This Gray Place," though currently released on Vimeo.

“‘The Gray Place’ is simply described as a robbery gone wrong. Aaron – barricaded in a rest stop bathroom – faces down the police, hallucinations, and a grim secret,” Ele said.

**Again for that film, see:**

<https://vimeo.com>

Mercurio-Cherrier concluded with a big thank you to talented musician Reese Roper, “The frontman for, "Five Iron Frenzy." was the music director/composer for "Cranked" and "This Is Only A Drug," the public service announcement. Look for "Five Iron Frenzy's new album look for their new album coming out in January 2021 named "Until This Shakes Apart." Roper is a national Christian Sca band, music that is between reggae and jazz.

